

Miriam Knoepfler

Q: When and where were you born?

A: In Berlin in 1918.

Q: And can you tell me a little bit about your education? In Berlin?

A: I went to the usual school, after four years I went to the high school, I didn't have to take any tests, my parents didn't have to pay any money, we were not Germans. My parents were stateless. Even though I was born in Germany that does not make you a German citizen according to the German law it's different here in America if you're born here you are an American. Not in Germany. You are what your parents are. My parents were stateless. They were originally Russian. They left Russia for Germany in 1905 and we were quite a traveled bunch so to speak because in 1895 they lived in South America for five years and then from South America went back to Russia and then to Germany settled in Germany in 1905, I was born in '18. I myself went to the schools, and then I studied music, went to the Conservatorium where I also made my teacher examination as a music teacher and that would be as far as education goes, I guess...

Q: After you went to, through the regular school, the (sentence incomplete)

A: Complete regular school. Was never thrown out on account of being Jewish, or anything like that. I guess that the time period was just right, I ended school in 1934. I did not go to the (sentence incomplete) I just went to the (sentence incomplete).

Q: And then you went to music school to continue?

A: I went to music school constantly I went to music school all my life, more or less.

Q: What did you hope to do with your music education?

A: What I hoped to do with it I don't know. Actually it was chosen by my parents. I never wanted it in the first place. I wanted to go into medicine. Naturally why. My brother was a doctor so what do you aspire as a younger sister. The difference between the children in my family was tremendous...my brother was born in 1902. Between 1902 and 1918 was nobody...I was the one. The oldest one was born in 1883...I was what they called the baby, and always stayed that baby. A spoiled brat.

Q: But your parents chose music?

A: But my parents didn't like that idea. Then I said maybe I should become a nurse, and I was talking to a doctor friend of the family and he said I don't think you should. Then I said maybe I should take gymnastics, and things like this, so my father didn't like the idea very much, but he said all right. Try it. But I was always continuing in music. I was very gifted. I had good fingers. My fingers run by themselves. And my mother had the idea that her daughter's name should be in big letters all over the world. Why she had the idea I don't know. But then she also figured that the two other daughters were just ordinary people. They were shorthand stenographers, that the youngest one should be different. Alright. So I went to that gym class and all of my life never ever anything happened to me. There the first time I went on the rings, I jumped and fell down and my arm was broken and that took care of that.

Q: That took care of the gymnastics.

A: So I stayed with music. Everyone said how can you bring your daughter up taking music, she should learn how to sew a dress. After all it's immigration time. She should learn how to make a hat. But how can you? Well my mother could.

Q: Were your parents in business in Berlin?

A: My father was up to '28 an accountant, then they dismissed him. Whether it was age or not I really wouldn't know. Then they started out in their own business. They had a, they were jobbers for a religious firm who manufactured soup cubes like they had them. Also some friends gave them kosher fat which my father also distributed to the different Jewish stores.

Q: While you were going to school, both the conservatory and the public school, did you have any non-Jewish friends?

A: Yes, very many. In fact they came and visited me after I finished school and moved away from that area, with my parents to be closer to the music school and it was nicer living there...They came and visited me even after the Nazi era was on. They called...Naturally I had many who were Deutsch national. I don't know if you know that was very right wing and the usual saying was, but you are different, which at that time didn't mean that much to me... I was more or less (sentence incomplete) I was blond, I had blue eyes, had a nice behavior. Had a nice way of getting along with people, so I was pretty much liked by the gentiles...

Q: Did your family and yourself go to many of the cultural events, the concerts?

A: I certainly did go to concerts. I went to operas and when it wasn't allowed any more I went to the (sentence incomplete).

Q: When did you first become aware of any Jewish feeling?

A: I personally in my own life was never aware of it. Now I'm talking about I myself. It went so far it must have been 1934 or 1935. When I was in music school one of the teachers went around at that time with an S.S. sign. The big sign that meant he was one of the big guys there. One of my teachers approached me one day and said "What do you intend to do?" I said I'm going to continue. He said, "But you should go to Kirshing or (sentence incomplete). But listen I am Jewish. That has nothing to do with it. You can get in there with no doubt. That was one of the big guys. But as I said I never found it on myself. Just the contrary. When they were collecting in the streets, gifts for the Germans for this or that I'm not giving I'm Jewish they looked at me and just laughed. You just want to get away with it. So I never had that. Also I went to the Police Department. You had to register for the name Sarah. So I went in there and they said "here comes our blondest gretchen which means here comes our blond Margareta. And I said no I came to register. He looked at me and felt very bad and said "But you know Sarah is a very beautiful name. Just think of Sarah Leander." Which at that time was a very famous actress...Alright so I myself, never, but my brother refused to go with me in the streets. My brother looked very much Jewish and was very much afraid that anything could happen to me that he's going with a gentile girl...So whenever we went together he walked a few steps ahead of me...

Q: How did you feel? You made a point of saying that you were Jewish...This was in the conservatory and street and so on. Did anyone give you a hard time?

A: No. They never did. They just didn't believe it.

Q: How did it make you feel?

A: They're crazy. I laughed it off. I was just a child. Because if I were adult I never would have said a thing like this, because I had to realize that it could bring me into very big trouble. But I didn't.

Q: How did your family react at this time? Your father and mother?

A: ...my father had died in '36 unfortunately, because I imagine that if my father had been alive they would have tried to get back to South America I would imagine. But my father died. My mother was an elderly person. She must have been in her sixties at that time. My one sister was married to a gentile. So she would have liked to leave because she didn't like the atmosphere. She didn't feel very secure. It made life very difficult for her and she got pregnant and she was not allowed to have children. She would have liked to have an abortion, but nobody dared to do anymore at that time. She had many abortions in her life, but at that time nobody dared to do any any more. It was '39 or end of '38. She had to carry the child, and she died consequently in childbirth. My other sister was not married, and I

would say that after '38 after Crystal Night they would have liked to leave and they tried. Naturally being born in Russia the only place for them to go was America. My mother had a sister living in America at that time, or Bermuda. Maybe America. I think she was already in America. And she was trying. For me that was hopeless because I was born in Germany so I could never get under the Russian quota. I had a boyfriend at that time and we tried to go to different consulates. The nice ones like France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, you name them, we went there. We don't need you. From England we got information that if I wanted to go as a housemaid I could go, but that was not my cup of tea. And then some friends approached my boyfriend and myself, and said of you want to tonight you have to stand in line, you can get passage to Shanghai. No questions asked, no nothing. Just bring the money. So we went to my mother and said look I'm going to marry your daughter and let's go. Well my mother said okay, what could she say.

Q: Let me ask you. Up to this time which was after Crystal Night, did you ever see any signs in the street (sentence incomplete) or were you ever stopped from going to?

A: I was never stopped from going anywheres. I would imagine in retrospect that most likely (sentence incomplete) was forbidden there for Jews. I don't know. I can not actually say when I saw the last opera. I might be able to look it up. I don't know. I don't recall. As I said I had the (sentence incomplete) to take it's place.

Q: Did you attend performances regularly at the (sentence incomplete)? Did you participate?

A: No I didn't participate. I was a member. Yes you could not perform as an artist, as a Jew in the outside world, but I don't know when that law got into existence. I believe when I got my teacher's certificate it might have been written there, for Jewish only. Just to be allowed to teach in Jewish organizations and Jewish schools, and things like that. Nevertheless I did teach gentile children come to think of it.

Q: Privately?

A: Yes. My pupils were all gentiles when I taught in '38 and '39.

Q: Did you, until 1938 ever consider emigrating?

A: I don't know. I don't think so. My parents were there at that time till '36 my father. Where my parents are I am. So it was in their hands.

Q: Do you remember any family discussions about what to do? In the event that Hitler would last?

A: It wasn't taken serious I would say. The only one who was serious in thinking of leaving was my brother who tried very badly, and he succeeded in '39, end of '39, because I left myself in '39 and he left after me. He went to England and then from England he went to America.

Q: The brother who's a doctor?

A: Yes. Which were the only ones to escape. My mother and my sister eventually went to concentration camps. Their papers came and they were not approved, and then they came again and for some reason they got lost. I never could find out what really went on there. There was some kind of hanky – panky.

Q: But they would have qualified under the Russian quota?

A: Definitely.

Q: When you say these people approached your fiance or your boyfriend was there any agency involved like the (sentence incomplete)?

A: No. That was just the traveling bureau, word of mouth. We have passage for Shanghai, we have a ship for Shanghai, so we stood in line. Our friends stood and we stood, and we left. We got out tickets...We stood in line from the night before, like you do when you go to a Horowitz concert here. We stood overnight. That's what we did there.

Q: I just want to backtrack a moment. You said on Crystal Night you were not particularly affected. Where were you on Crystal Night?

A: Most probably I was home or at my boyfriend's home. I don't know, but I think the next morning, I was home naturally. We walked around. We were just stunned about the devastation...the broken windows, the burnt synagogues, and couldn't grasp it somehow. It was just beyond imagination. I was warned to be careful. Naturally it went in one ear and the other one out...

Q: Did it change your attitude at all, walking around that morning?

A: ...I wouldn't remember.

Q: You weren't determined at that point to find a way out or?

A: There was no way out at that time. According to all our information there was just no way...so if something comes up, fine, we'll go...

Q: Did you feel in fear of your life at that point?

A: ...I don't think I did. No.

Q: Did you belong to a temple in Berlin?

A: I wouldn't know if we belonged or not. I know that my mother would always go to synagogue on the holy days like Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and there was a ticket for me too, which after a certain while I wouldn't take part any more I would just decide, well sorry. I mean I would go and visit her, but that would be as far as I went.

Q: The only reason I ask that is I was curious if any of the rabbis or there was any attempt in the congregation....

A: I would not know about that at all. As I said I was not active and I did not go and I could say if they even did say anything in their sermons...

Q: How did you feel about going to a place like Shanghai?

A: How I thought about the possibility?

Q: Yes. When it was presented to you?

A: It was the only way to get out, in other words you do not question it. That's where you go...The time period was short...It was a decision that was done on one, two three, quick. Maybe two days or so, I don't even recall any more. The departure was very fast after that also. It was just try to get your things together, and make sure you have what you need...

Q: Where did you depart from?

A: Berlin. I mean we took a plane to Italy. We flew out of Berlin. Naturally examination in Munich. The plane had to land for examination. From Munich the plane left again for Milano. I think it was Milano, somewhere in Italy. We spent a day in Milano, a day in Venice, we went to Genoa from there, and then we had to leave.

Q: You mentioned before that you had to register for the name Sarah, this was already in 1939?

A: No, this must have been earlier. That was earlier than '39.

Q: Was that in your passport that you had to register?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Why did you have a passport at that time?

- A: Stateless, as a stateless person you have to always have papers...I never was a German. I always had a status that had to be renewed every year. Which never gave us difficulties. In fact I remember my mother writing to me at Shanghai..."We don't have to go every day to register at the police department because we are well known and so to speak bonofido residents..."
- Q: Speaking of stateless. Did this ever give your parents or yourself any problems in Germany, before?
- A: No. Nobody ever bothered with it...Nobody even questioned it. As I said, I went to high school, and the income of my parents was not sufficient so they asked for a reduction in the price of high school or completely, and it was taken care of. It had nothing to do with whether we were stateless or not.
- Q: Before Crystal Night when Greenspan killed van R? did that have any effect on your family because they were stateless?
- A: No.
- Q: Okay. When you left that day, when you left on your way to Shanghai, how did you feel about leaving?
- A: I guess my boyfriend was very smart. He took a plane. It was the first time I took a plane...I guess the excitement took over.
- Q: Do you remember, I guess the rest of the family was still in Germany, including the brother that emigrated afterwards. Was that difficult for you?
- A: Apparently not...First of all I had definitely the belief that nothing would happen number one. At least not to them. Number two, that they would get out in time. My mother and sister and brother most probably not to America because all of them were born in Russia.
- Q: You brothers were also born in Russia?
- A: Yes.
- Q: When you took the boat from Genoa, did it go straight from there to Shanghai?
- A: To Shanghai...The first ten days or fifteen days we were not allowed to leave on board. We landed in different ports, but we were never allowed to go off. Once in all that trip we were allowed to leave board. It was kind of like a cattle carrier. Naturally I had again my problems. Even though we had second class or whatever you wanted to call passage I was allowed to be in first class. I had my

meals in first class. I walked around in first class and what have you...Playing the piano helps...

Q: Did you have to leave with just ten Reichmarks?

A: I think that's what it was. Yes.

Q: Was this a German boat?

A: Italian. Julius Caesar.

Q: Were there many other German Jews?

A: Only. I say cattle transport. I think the cabins which were meant for one or two were filled with three or four...And it was so hot in these cabins that most of us took our mattresses and slept outside.

Q: On the deck?

A: No, in front there were always these passageways so we were outside sleeping. On the deck chairs.

Q: Was this originally a passenger boat?

A: Yes. But as I said it was most probably a cruise ship for two or for one. Whoever had heard of four people in a cabin...

Q: How would you describe the mood or the morale on the boat?

A: Joyous...We all enjoyed it I think. At least I had a good time. I was with my boyfriend. I was young. I had lots of friends on the ship. I made friends every day. In the evening we went to the cabin of one of the navigators. He was very interested in music himself. He had a lovely record player. He had beautiful records.

Q: So you were able to make a good trip?

A: ...I mean you know.

Q: When you.....

A: The only thing that bothered us was too many people. Too many kids crying.

Q: When you arrived in Shanghai, what were your impressions?

A: What kind of a thing is that. Especially the welcome. We were met and we were put in an open truck with baggage and all. Oh maybe fifty people in a truck or what have you. And the first accommodation was in a community place which slept maybe thirty, maybe forty, maybe fifty in one room. You know like a dormitory...I only lasted for two days because then my boyfriend said, "Look that's not for us. Get out of here." We rented a room. And we stayed in that room for about a month and then we took an apartment.

Q: When you say the community house was that the Hyam?

A: Something like this...I don't remember...

Q: Who was in charge of meeting you at the boat and taking you to these accommodations?

A: The Jewish Committee. They had a special Jewish Committee. I don't know the name any more...I have it somewhere...

Q: That's alright. You mentioned.....

A: They were very helpful they saw that you had food and so on.

Q: After two days you left. Where did you have an apartment?

A: In the same neighborhood there were rooming house, what you would call it at that time. Apparently immigration had been flourishing pretty much for that particular district and anybody who had a head on his shoulders rented rooms. They were not much to speak of. I don't think we stayed in that room longer than two weeks.

Q: In "the Japanese, Nazis, and Jews" they talk about rooms on two lanes, was this what..."

A: Ours was not a lane. Ours was on a main street. By lanes I don't know what he meant but in Shanghai the houses are built...You see this here was a main street, and then it goes in here like a little nice village. Which is nothing wrong with it, very lovely homes in that lanes.

Q: When you say you rented an apartment, when you came there both of you had come basically with the ten Reichmark, what did you do?

A: No...No. The man that I married later on here in America. His mother had sent some money over to Shanghai waiting for us...Also family relations from my boyfriend had sent money over for us. In Italy we had found money. And we had valuables which we could sell or pawn. He took his accordion along, and I imagine he pawned it to get some money, or maybe he sold it...I don't remember

anymore. I had heavy silver napkin holders. We were allowed to take out up to forty grams of silver, or something like this...So, I sold it or pawned it I really don't know, because I don't know where they are now, so maybe I sold them...

Q: So you were able to use this money to rent the room?

A: Right. And very soon my boyfriend got himself a job.

Q: How was he able to get a job in Shanghai?

A: Due to the fact that...Now what did he do first? I don't know. He got that job in a (words missing) bus company. He was basically by profession an accountant. He had his doctor in economy in Germany. And he got that job in the bus company. I don't know what he did before. Maybe he got it so very fast. I don't know.

Q: When you say he got a job in the bus company, well who owned the bus company?

A: I would imagine a conglomerate. It was probably American, English.

Q: Not native Shanghai?

A: I doubt it.

Q: Where was he driving, I mean you were new in Shanghai, how was he able to drive this bus?

: He didn't have to drive it. He was an accountant. He was inside in the office.

Q: Oh, I see. Was this job enough to meet your expenses?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: How long did you anticipate staying in Shanghai?

A: Tomorrow. Tomorrow. Okay?

Q: Okay. And after tomorrow didn't come?

A: Came tomorrow and another tomorrow.

Q: But had you applied at this time for re-emigration?

A: No. For what. Where to?

Q: Well I thought maybe you had applied to America as a...?

A: No. I never did. First I was there and I was in the hands of my boyfriend. Let him take decisions. In a very old fashioned upbringing the man takes it. He does. Fine. He took care of me...No he was very interested that I pursue my musical career...Concertize So I wasn't allowed to do anything, just play the piano. We had a maid who cleaned, who cooked, who shopped. Just play the piano.

Q: How did you get the piano?

A: He had his own brought in.

Q: I see. He had his own brought from Germany?

A: He had a lift. The music was there, the piano was there. There was other things we had...Oh, yes.

Q: How did you adjust? As time went by how did you adjust to life in Shanghai?

A: It was a very nice life. I mean we lived very comfortably. We had a very lovely two room apartment. Not a kitchen. We went out to eat.

Q: Was that common not to have a kitchen?

A: No, people had kitchens, but we didn't. We were in a private house and it was, well it is not a suburb, it belongs to Shanghai, but it was in the end of Shanghai. Very close, I don't know if you read the book I don't know if it was mentioned or not. It should have been mentioned. We lived close to that park which was a very very big park like Central Park, and there was a University there. And it was a private house that belonged to a Russian lady who lived there with her daughter, and the second floor she had another lady living, and there were two rooms and your own bathroom naturally. Those were big rooms which we had rented from her. And we stayed there for about a year and after a year we took our own apartment...No it wasn't our own apartment. We sublet it from an Austrian refugee. They had there three rooms, but it just was laid out like two kitchens if you remember here in America you have two kitchens, a big kitchen and a little kitchen so to speak, an (word missing) room, a preparation room. This apartment was laid out the same. It had a big kitchen and in the front was a little kitchen. They made a little kitchen so they could sublet. I had my own refrigerator, my own sink, everything our own. In that apartment we had our own bathroom, we had two bathrooms in that small apartment. We had our own bathroom and our own big room.

Q: Did you have any connection at all in Shanghai with the Japanese or the Chinese population?

A: Well number one the Japanese only started in '41. When I came to Shanghai in '39 we met Chinese people definitely. First of all through the business my

boyfriend was working in. We were invited and we met them. No they were not Chinese, yes they were, but the majority were British which we met through the company where he worked, and we met the other refugees which we were friendly with. And there were concerts given, we went to concerts.

Q: Who set up the organization of the concerts? Or any cultural activities?

A: We had our own orchestra concert, their own symphony in Shanghai. It was led by an Italian.

Q: When you say their own? You mean made up of...

A: Shanghai musicians, English, American, French what have you, They had newspapers, foreign newspapers, critics. The French critic was G (words missing) a famous guy out there.

Q: Were you able to attend these concerts?

A: Definitely. And they also had concerts in the summer months outside in the (words missing) Park, with the mosquitoes, but they went around and gave you mosquito candles. You have them now here...I don't know if you ever saw them or not. But they were coils, not candles, green coils. They are very good. In case you ever want to sit out there in your garden, you don't have to be bothered. Buy the mosquito coils.

Q: Oh, alright.

A: I'm very serious, and they have a little...they break very easily, and it takes a long time till it runs down. It has kind of an annoying smell, but the mosquito won't bite you.

Q: That's what they had in Shanghai? Did you perform at all in Shanghai?

A: Now my boyfriend wanted very much that I should play with the orchestra and he approached the conductor, and he said yes, let her play for me which I did. Naturally what he wanted was to get some money, and maybe he wanted something else, but I was too naive and too stupid, anyway I didn't get along with that. Didn't do it. Okay so that was taken out of our reach. Then we decided I should better play my own recital, so I prepared for it. Naturally for things like this you need a lot of money. So we tried to present it to someone who had the money. Who had the money? The Jewish organizations had the money. So we approached the Jewish organizations and I was very friendly with one of the big shots of the Arabian, whatever Jewish people there, a mister Allis Hayim. No Arabian, Egyptian, whatever. He was very wealthy, and very well known, and he was number one, and sort of the right hand of Sir Victor Sassoon. I knew Allis Hayim and I was invited to him and so on. And we approached him and he said

yes it was a good idea and do it. And I was very much inclined to give it in aid for the old people, and this was refused and he said in aid of the European emigrants. That recital was on the twenty fifth of November in 1941. It took place, for some unforeseen reason the heating didn't work, sitting there cold, the lighting didn't work, something went wrong I don't even remember what it was, but the recital took place and everything was fine and good and the critics were very helpful and what have you, but as you know on December seventh the war broke out and then we buried all of that. Before I played over the radio and I played for little things. I don't know if I have them here you know.

Q: When you played this concert on November 25, where did you play it?

A: In a big concert hall, The Lyceum called, where all the symphony concerts took place, and what have you.

Q: Was most of your audience of the European refugee community?

A: No. No.

Q: Mixed audience?

A: Very mixed audience. I was introduced to Shanghai through these Hayims. Mrs. Hayim gave a tea in honor of me before the concert where everyone was invited who had something, in other words all the big shots. I have the list here somewheres. The ambassadors, and you name it.

Q: In other words you were really introduced into the Shanghai society?

A: Unfortunately it didn't last long because they all had to go to concentration camps later on. So there was only a few French ones left...I eventually gave lessons in French to French ambassador people.

Q: When you say the war broke out in December 1941, how did this affect you?

A: I affected me greatly because everything was again destroyed. Whatever was built up was destroyed at that point.

Q: In what way do you mean that?

A: Musically. In other words here I had given my recital hoping to get something out of it. And it could never be much realized because there was nobody there anymore to support it or who would be interested in things like this...

Q: When you say there was nobody there to support it. How was this different after the war broke out?

A: Number one. Allis Hayim was taken away, and soon everyone else was taken away. They were all British citizens. They came into a concentration camp so to speak. Internment camps. All of them. There were Speilmans, there were (words missing), there Elias, you name them, they all had to go.

Q: They were all men who were mentioned, that's why you should read that book.

A: That's why I want to read it. They're all in here too. They all subsidize that thing.

Q: How did this affect not only you, but how did this affect the refugee community in Shanghai?

A: Well let's do that very slowly. In '41 when the Japanese came in, as I said before, I lived very nicely out of that district. Now, I also was not a German citizen. Most of the refugees were either German, Polish, Czechoslovakian or what have you. I myself also tried at that particular time to maybe get Russian citizenship. I went to the Russian consulate, which naturally didn't bring me to anything. It was just an empty gesture. But I went nevertheless.

Q: Why did you even think of doing that?

A: I thought it might give me some sort of protection. My boyfriend being a German national and all these people who did not live in a certain area. Shanghai became occupied by the Japanese who had their own rules and regulations. One of them was that all the Jewish people had to go into a designated area. This designated area was the least built up area, the least friendly area. It was overcrowded already without these people who came from the settlement area. Shanghai had settlements, French settlements, British settlements, American settlements etc.

Q: Who lived in this particular area? that was designated for the district?

A: It was predominately Chinese people living there, and refugees who came and were settled there in the beginning, because that's where we were taken, that is the place where I was staying in the dormitory, and the ones who had big ambitions moved out very fast, and the rest stayed on. But now they all had to go back there. It became very, very overcrowded and rooms were at a premium. Toilet facilities were horrible, kitchen facilities were awful. It was just a horror actually, to live there, I will say that. But again, I didn't have to go because again I was lucky, Number one. I was stateless I don't know if that alone would have helped me, but one of my friends had married a Chinese gentleman, and this Chinese gentleman was very nice and very helpful and introduced me to Japanese people and I went a few times to the Japanese consulate and to the Japanese offices somewhere. I got my bill of health, stay where you are. That was the end of that.

Q: Now this district, was this the Hong Que? Where the Jewish people had to go?

A: That's right.

Q: Basically you were one of the few then?

A: I wasn't one of the few. There were a number of them that got away with it. In other words a doctor would have gotten a permission, maybe he paid. I don't know. Quite a few stayed out too. I don't know. But as a rule they had to go. I was one of the few. Yes.

Q: You were living then in the French settlement?

A: No, it was called the extra territorial settlement, I think.

Q: After all these people had been taken, the Kadurys, the Hayims and so on had been taken because of their British citizenship how were you able to get along living outside of Hongque district?

A: Well number one at that time all of these Chinese guys got me piano lessons with Chinese and Korean pupils which paid very handsomely. I do believe that the Jewish refugees supported me also to a certain extent. I'm not sure, but they might have given me a certain amount.

Q: Were the students able to come to you?

A: No. I came to them. They could have come to me too, but I went to them. By the way I did not have the piano at a certain time, because my boyfriend had to move and he took the piano.

Q: He had to move into the district you mean?

A: Yes he had to move into the district. Oh yes. By that time we had made up our minds that we would not get married anyway. But he had to move into the district. And I gave piano lessons to Chinese, Korean, French, Germans. And then my boyfriend got himself involved with some people who had a store. And they most probably had to live in Honhque also. They most probably had to give up everything and move there, but the store was kept up because maybe it was necessary. People got permission to work outside the district also. He had the store and he approached the guy and said, well you know I would like to go into dealing in music, there's a great demand for it, buying old music, selling it, and he got involved in that. I helped him with that also, at a certain time, and I got into German circles, now real German circles and gave lessons there again. And he made money by selling these music books. Oh no, first it was in a bookstore. That's right. That was a bookstore, and we got Hynaman involved with the

music, and we carried that together, that took care of that. Hynaman had to move into the district, but he kept his business outside.

Q: And he had permission to?

A: Yes.

Q: When you say you gave lessons to all these nationals, and German nationals, did you have any difficulty with the German nationals?

A: No. In fact the Germans were very helpful to us. I mean to my boyfriend. I met most of the Germans through my boyfriend who met them through the bookstore and through Hynaman. And we were invited to their house and it was very nice.

Q: Did you ever have any discussions about...?

A: No I don't think we did. Why should we trample on each other's feet. They were diplomatic in that sense.

Q: How did you make yourself understood with all the other nationals?

A: They all spoke English.

Q: Did you speak English when you left Germany?

A: Yes. I didn't speak it, but I had six years of school English.

Q: So that you felt that you could make yourself pretty much understood?

A: I guess in the years you learn anyway. Even after six years you have a certain working knowledge of the language. I read a lot of books.

Q: I was going to ask, did you ever have any moments when the language or lack of language was embarrassing or anything like that?

A: I don't recall because as I said I visited Allis Hayim and I apparently was not tongue tied.

Q: When the Hongque ghetto was established, was there any feeling either to you or that you knew of among the refugee community of being threatened by the Nazi, you know the Nazis were allies?

A: At one time there was talk that they were afraid of yes in fact there was talk at one time that the Japanese had certain gas pellets somewhere stored away and wanted to get away from them I don't know how. I don't know how much, but I heard about it, yes. The Japanese were kind of cruel to the people. I mean my

boyfriend naturally tried to stay out as long as he could, and he did and he was caught I think for one day he was imprisoned, something like that. A lot of people got sick due to this very drastic measures, they, the prisons were not exactly hotels.

Q: What about life within the Hongque ghetto after the Japanese had restricted?

A: I don't know much about it. They had to be in there at a certain time. They had to show their passports when they went in and out. I could go and visit freely anytime I wanted to and I guess Jewish refugees organizations took care of their needs as far as food was concerned, clothing and whatever. They all took little jobs, they all helped each other. I think they kept their spirits up.

Q: Were you able to do anything in the way of performing in the ghetto area?

A: No I didn't.

Q: When you came into the ghetto, what kind of living conditions did you find there?

A: As I said, when I visited it was terrible. Very primitive for the most people. Their cooking facilities were very often on open fires. Just very small rooms, and washing dishes you would wash dishes in the bathroom because it was the only sink you had, so to speak. Toilets were usually community toilets, I mean you had a rooming house where maybe there were ten or twelve families lived, and you can maybe compare it to Harlem if you want to. The conditions you read about there, it was there too.

Q: When you came into the ghetto, how would you describe the morale?

A: Well you must realize one thing, that the people I visited were people who were more or less were through it and together after so they were all a little bit downcast, but the other hand they were all allowed to work outside, so it wasn't that bad. They tried to improve their living conditions, I mean they were little holes they lived in most of them, I mean the single people I know, it was just was not pleasant to live there, no question about it.

Q: How would you compare, or how would you say that the refugee community associated with either the well the Japanese after the war, with the Chinese people, the local Chinese people? Any communication?

A: I couldn't say. I wouldn't know.

Q: Was there between you and the...?

- A: Was I was naturally, the pupils I had I was invited to their houses. And when there was a party they were very generous and helpful and also through that Chinese husband of a friend of mine I was always at their parties.
- Q: Having come from Europe, having come from a very different culture, how did this affect you?
- A: It didn't affect me. I was in a cocoon.
- Q: Do you think that was true of most of the refugee community too?
- A: I don't know. I can't say. That's why I say I have so little to add, so little to give, somebody who really went through the mill could really say more. I don't consider myself having gone through the mill. I was just damn lucky.
- Q: When you were in Shanghai did you have access to radios?
- A: Yes we had radios.
- Q: Did you know what was going on in Europe?
- A: Yes. Yes. Yes we heard radios, we knew about it and I always was under the impression that Hitler never will win, no matter what somebody else said.
- Q: Did you have any idea what was happening to the Jews in Europe?
- A: No. No. No. I didn't.
- Q: How did the end of the war change things for you?
- A: End of the war. Well number one the Americans came into Shanghai. We opened a certain kind of a sales organization. They called it a P.X. And the Americans came and they were selling there mostly Chinese silks, jewelry, and what have you. And I was selling there. I got myself a job there. I met a lot of Americans. One of them I was trustworthy enough. I gave him a few scarves to send over to my future husband which they delivered.
- Q: When you say your future husband, had you met him in Shanghai?
- A: No. My future husbands, I say husbands, it happened I married two brothers. The first one died in '58 and then I married the other one in '63. My brother went to school, there were three boys, I married the younger ones. My brother went with the oldest one to school, now that one I did not marry, and as I said he went to school with them. They left in 1921 for this country, and my brother left in '39 and so did I. The correspondence was always kept alive through the mothers. My mother corresponded with my husband's mother over the years. That's how I

found money in Shanghai. And when I was in Shanghai and the war was over the correspondence started again between me and her and she wrote me in one of her last, "Don't you get married, I have a son who isn't married yet." Okay, so that's how it happened.

Q: So you gave these American soldiers scarves to send?

A: No. I mean some of them came over and I said where are you from and I said New York and I said I'll tell you what. I have some friends and I would like some of them to get a gift, would you take it? They took it and they brought it. Trustworthy people. Everybody looked at me, how can you do a thing like this. I mean in retrospect...So that was one of the little things I did, and there was another American young man who I gave my money. I figured I might have difficulties in taking it out. He delivered it also.

Q: You were lucky. Or else you have a good eye for who to trust...

A: I was lucky. I'll say it again and again. I was lucky. I cannot complain actually. So I met a lot of Americans there and eventually a contact with my brother started. So my brother naturally said well you have to come here, and so I went and slowly started the procedures. My brother sent the papers and I went to that stinker official there and that stinker official said that's not enough we're not going to let you go, and I told my brother that's not enough so he sent me the papers of my husband number one. That was enough. So then I had to wait, and then I left.

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And when did you leave Shanghai?

A: '47.

Q: What happened between the end of the war and '47?

A: As I said, I started to work at the P.X. and when that folded I thought, now why don't you get yourself some job with some firms, so I got myself a job with one firm as a secretary, but that didn't last very long. I didn't care for that guy there. Then I got a job with Americans and lasted maybe half a year, I don't know. Then they went back to America. Naturally I was always very well paid, I want you to know that. Then I got myself a job with an Arabian Jew again. Arabian, Egyptian, whatever. He had a dairy farm and I was there in the office, and I had that job till I left.

Q: Let me ask you, what in some cases the refugees who had come to Shanghai were not able to get jobs why do you think it was easier for you to find jobs?

A: I don't know from what refugees you are talking. I don't know what years you are talking about.

- Q: Well either the early years, I guess the early years I am talking about.
- A: If you are talking about when they emigrated here from '39 to '4? I was not employed in that years, I gave lessons, alright. So there is a little difference. I never looked for a job. I have to say that also, but...
- Q: Was it common then at the end of the war, when the war was over, to find a job?
- A: I would say that people who knew something could always find a job and I know people who didn't know anything, always made a buck. They were just able to do things. I know somebody who gave lessons or would play in a bar many of them, or in a restaurant, and would make a little money. The next one would sell something and would buy it and sell it again and make a little bit money. There was a lot of trading going on. Actually everyone who had a profession like a doctor or dentist made money and was working.
- Q: Did they make money then from the non – Jewish community? The non refugee Jewish community?
- A: Not necessarily, there were enough Jewish people who as I said made their living outside, had money and could support all of the services. I'm sure my doctor saw as well as Chinese as Jewish, and gentile people. Definitely. They also treated people for nothing. They didn't get a penny from me and didn't expect it, never asked.
- Q: That's what I meant, was there free I guess from your experience was there an intercommunication between the Chinese and the French, they would go to a German refugee doctor?
- A: Oh yes, yes. The refugee doctors were always well known as good doctors period.. So they certainly were preferred. They had access to the hospitals and were good surgeons, and were well known.
- Q: Did disease, the different foods and disease play a big role?
- A: It didn't affect me. I had once hepatitis, but I got out of it.
- Q: Was it hard to adjust to the foods?
- A: No. I wasn't much of a cook to start with as I said in the beginning we didn't even have cooking possibilities. The first two weeks when we lived in Hongque we cooked on a spirit burner... one flame , then you filled it with spirit, gasoline I guess it was. I cooked and my cooking consisted of rice which I knew how to cook and fruits which I knew how to cook. A meal consisted of rice and fruits. That was my big cooking.

Q: When you ate out did you go to what kind of restaurants?

A: When we lived in Hongque the restaurants were mostly German ones.

Q: When you say you lived in Hongque, was that before...?

A: That was the first two weeks.

Q: That was before it became the ghetto?

A: Yes. But it was a ghetto. It always was. Later it was really named the ghetto, but it always was. But the Jewish people had already made restaurants, there was one next to the other so to speak, and you could always eat. It was nice food. Nice surroundings. As pleasant as possible. And when we lived out of that area we went to other restaurants, and they were also German run mostly or European run.

Q: Run by the people who had emigrated under Hitler, or people who had been there before?

A: Both. There were lots of Russian people there. I don't think we covered it at all in our talk. The Russian emigration came through the Bolsheviks, and most of the Russians came from Vladivostok. There was a big, big Russian community there and they had naturally opened a lot of restaurants, bakeries, and stores and all. So, strangely enough.....(end of tape).

QL After you left Shanghai, or when you left Shanghai, was there a feeling of disintegration of the Shanghai community? Did most people leave?

A: A lot of people left Shanghai. Yes, all my friends left sooner or later, before me, after me, at the same time. The Arabian Jews left, I mean Allis Hayim went to Hong Kong, Speilman went I think to South America, Parry went to Hong King.

Q: Why was there such a tremendous exit?

A: Because they left when the Japanese, I mean the communists started to come in. Hynaman left when the communists came in. German refugees who made a good living there stayed on to the end. Like Hynaman who had a bookstore, he only left when the communists came in and I think he was even imprisoned while he was there, and went to Canada then.

Q: Did you know at this point what had happened to the rest of your family? Your mother and your sister?

A: I think I had hoped against hope, but after the war was over and I tried to get in contact the truth came out. And I found out particulars from my brother in law

who was gentile as I mentioned before, and he stayed in Berlin all the time, and he could give me the dates when they were taken and where they were taken.

Q: This was the husband of your sister who died in childbirth?

A: Right.

Q: Having to leave Shanghai, you were in Shanghai what, eight years?

A: I didn't want to leave, hated to leave, no I didn't like to leave. I felt very happy there, I had a boyfriend there, I mean another boyfriend naturally, and I was very well adjusted, but I left, nevertheless.

Q: Was that because you felt you had to leave on account of the communists?

A: No. No, there were no communists when I left. Nobody even dreamed of communists.

A: That was in 49?

A: I left in '47.

Q: Why did you decide to leave then?

A: My brother wanted me to come. And my boyfriend said, well it's better for you to leave, look. It's the better place to be...

Q: How did it feel, you had to leave Germany once, and now after eight years you had to leave Shanghai? That must be a little difficult.

A: I really don't know. As I said I left Germany. I had my boyfriend, so I was twenty one, and at that time you lean towards a boyfriend more than your family, so I knew there was no other way apparently, so I left. I don't think it was such a hard thing. And leaving Shanghai was not such a hard thing either. I came for my brother. I was looking forward to seeing him.

Q: How did it feel. You mentioned you had sort of established a (word missing) for yourself. How did you feel about starting a life for yourself somewhere else?

A: Well I came to my brother and see what was happening to him. And the Americans I had met, and I had spoken to them about how I'm going to meet people, etc. etc. If you belong to your congregation you will meet people. So you jump and you see what happens.

Q: When you came over to the United States?

- A: I didn't like to leave San Francisco either. Naturally I started in San Francisco and in San Francisco I really didn't know much people.
- Q: When you came from Shanghai to San Francisco did you come on an American boat?
- A: Yes. An LTD a very small boat. There were about forty or fifty people there.
- Q: A passenger boat, or a transport?
- A: No, kind of a transport boat.
- Q: What was the voyage like?
- A: Very nice. Very nice, very enjoyable.
- Q: When you came to San Francisco who met you?
- A: Who met me? A friend of mine who had left before and gone to San Francisco and my boss's nephew. I had worked that time as I said and I left, I emigrated, and he met me there.
- Q: Meaning in the P.X.?
- A: No. No in the end I worked for someone who was the owner of a dairy farm, an Egyptian Jew, and his nephew lived in San Francisco and he met me. I think he was the first one.
- Q: Were your intentions always to come to New York?
- A: I never had any intentions. I was always pushed or shifted or commandeered.
- Q: Were you commandeered to come to New York?
- A: Naturally.
- Q: Why did you say you did not like to leave San Francisco?
- A: Because I like the city. A beautiful city.
- Q: How long were you there?
- A: About three weeks.
- Q: How did you, were you able to bring whatever money you had in Shanghai with you? Was that sufficient to make it in San Francisco for three weeks?

A: First of all the immigration department gave me money also. It was a committee. I'm just trying to find the name, HIAS. HIAS paid for the hotel where I stayed. And I looked to get a job in San Francisco which I couldn't get in the first three weeks. So I came here.

Q: Did HIAS give you any help in trying to get a job in San Francisco?

A: No, I don't think so. I think they were more or less interested in trying to locate me to my brother push me over there so they have no more responsibility.

Q: When you came to New York, what were your expectations of life in New York?

A: Another city.

Q: Did your brother meet you? Did you come across country by train?

A: Yes. I came by train.

Q: What were your impressions? You had lived in Europe and Shanghai and now you were crossing the United States, how did you feel about here?

A: So you travel. I wasn't very much keeled over if that's what you would like to hear. The only time I was keeled over I think was in Hawaii. We stopped in Honolulu, and that was the first time in eight years that I could eat fruits without washing them. Without being afraid, that you had to boil them, or take the skins off or things like this. That's what I liked. Okay, because I even wrote it down. I mean San Francisco was a nice city, but so what.

Q: When you came to New York, did you get a job here?

A: No. Who needs a job.

Q: How did you manage to support yourself?

A: I went to my brother where I arrived I think on the thirtieth of June. At his house. And he lived in Brooklyn four flights up in a three room hole with a son who at that time must have been nineteen, no it must have been eighteen because he still went to school and I didn't like it there. So I arrived on the twenty ninth of June, that's a big difference, it's very important. The first of July, that was two days over, my husband number one came to look me over. He came with his partner, Sammy Goldstein. He came to look me over, and on the fifth of July I came to the city, to the office of his, and I don't think I slept ever again anywhere in Brooklyn.

Q: Where did you go from there?

A: They invited me, they took me out to their house in the country. They had a house in the country in Mahopaw. I stayed there. I mean the mother of theirs who knew me as a three year old child. I stayed there, and occasionally I would go to the city and stay at that time brother in law's house. Who had a house in Riverdale. And stayed there, and then I went back to the country, and then I said well maybe I should look for a room. I looked for a room. I made the motions, and they said oh you can't live in that neighborhood...no you can't live there, well why don't you live here. The apartment is big enough. In the city they had a five room apartment. It was just her son living there and she herself. And then he said, oh I don't know, I think we were invited to a wedding and he took me along. He was invited, and very naturally he took me along to these people he said oh, that's my future wife. I didn't know about it.

Q: But you were commandeered?

A: I was commandeered as I said. That was that.

Q: Just to go back for a minute when you arrived at your brother's house in Brooklyn, how did your brother, and your 18 year old nephew receive you?

A: They picked me up at the train station. I guess it was Grand Central Station. I had one suitcase. My nephew took my suitcase, my brother took me. They took me to the subway. Now it's a long ride to Brooklyn. He apparently wasn't very wealthy, so we took the subway. I'm not very used to this thing. I was a spoiled brat.

Q: What did you think of the subway ride?

A: I didn't think much of it. But I'm used to subways of that's what you wanted to know. I mean Berlin had subways. You see I'm not coming from a little village. Nothing could keel me over any more. It's big, so it's a little bigger.

Q: Did your nephew, well he was born here, right?

A: No, my nephew was born in Berlin and when he was about nine or ten years old he went to England, and after two years he went to America.

Q: By this time did he feel himself Americanized?

A: Oh yes. He was Americanized I'm sure. He went to Peter Stuyvesant High School. He must have been the last year when I met him.

Q: Did you continue with your music here?

- A: I got married right away. As I said I started in June, in November I got married. In December I got pregnant. In October my first child was born...
- Q: Where did you live at that time?
- A: Riverside Drive.
- Q: This was the apartment that you went to?
- A: Yes. Washington Heights near the Hebrew Tabernacle.
- Q: Oh near the Hebrew Tabernacle?
- A: That's how the whole thing is, we are members of the Hebrew Tabernacle.
- Q: When you first settled down here this was a different kind of life than you had lived up to now. How did you feel about being a young mother in Washington Heights? Were you among mostly refugees?
- A: I didn't like it. I didn't like Washington Heights. I never did.
- Q: Why not?
- A: I had very little in common with all these people. First of all I was considered an outsider. I didn't run around with a Mogen David so everybody thought I was a German girl. And people were a little nasty.
- Q: You mean the German Jews?
- A: Yes, were really nasty. And I didn't like it there.
- Q: Did you explain that you had been in Shanghai and so on?
- A: You can't tell it to every strange person. You go into a dry cleaning store and you get your stuff, you can't tell I'm Jewish. I mean in the course of conversation with your neighbor you might say it, all of a sudden you will see how a face lights up and a disposition changes. And then you know.
- Q: They understand. In terms of your music did you ever, even after your children were born?
- A: I tried to play the piano, in fact I tried to take lessons and when I was supposed to come to my very first lesson my husband got very seriously sick so that took care of that. That was in '48, and then I put it aside. After nine years or eight years I decided now it is time the kids are a little bit bigger, let's see what you can do

now. I started again. It took about ten months and then my husband died, and then I said goodbye. Then I stopped completely. Now I'm trying to play again.

Q: Did you participate in the time you were married, did you go to concerts?

A: Orchestra concerts, yes.

Q: Did you ever take lessons yourself to get back?

A: That's what I'm just saying. That's the two attempts I made.

Q: When you started to take these lessons who did you take them with? I mean was it someone from the German community.

A: The first gentleman was a German, but I never even met him. I only spoke to him over the telephone and as I said it was supposed to be the first lesson and then my husband got very seriously sick so I never met the guy. He was a German Jew. The second guy was a Russian Jew, a Russian American I found out about. In my building there was a young fellow living who played the piano and I asked him to give lessons to my son which he did, and in the course of conversation I asked him with whom he was taking lessons and what this guy's teaching him, and it sounded interesting to me so I got in contact with this guy. I was very pleased.

Q: Were most of your friends during those years part of the refugee community?

A: Washington Height? Friends. I had no friends. Those were all taken over from my husband the friends we had. Not from the community.

Q: They were not from the community? They were American?"

A: They were Americans and they were friends from the early, early years. People he knew from Germany yet.

Q: He came much earlier then?

A: He came in '21.

Q: Would you say that today after living here thirty years now are most of your friends?

A: I'm not assimilated. I have no friends.

Q: You say you are not assimilated. Of the people you associate with would you say you associate more with Americans or?

A: I would even say I do not associate with people. Sounds strange doesn't it?

- Q: No. Do you consider yourself more an American or a member of the German Jewish community in New York?
- A: I do not consider myself of the German Jewish community in New York. No. I don't consider myself an American either. I consider myself a member of the world. It's very funny. I just spoke the other day, I'm at this point I was approached and I'm giving German lessons to a lady, I mean lessons is a big word I'm having conversation, and she is Romanian born and she asked me something similar to that and that's why I was able to give the answer fast. Because she said you know I'm living here a number of years and I'm not Americanized and I just do not have anything in common with American people. She says she feels much better in Europe. No matter where, but Europe.
- Q: Have you been back to Europe?
- A: I was back to Europe once, in '69, '70.
- Q: Was it in Germany?
- A: I visited my brother in law in Germany. I visited my nephew who was at that time in Nuremberg, and I visited another nephew in Hamburg and I visited friends in England.
- Q: How did you feel about going back to Germany?
- A: I didn't go back to Germany. I visited my family.
- Q: How did you feel when you were visiting your family, did you come into contact with any other Germans?
- A: I looked up a few of my older teachers and visited with them who were very friendly, very courteous, very happy to see me. And felt terrible that they couldn't hide my girl friend, that she had to perish. That's stupid, but that didn't change the matter. She is done. And....
- Q: The reason I ask that is that I was wondering after all that experience, how you felt about being back there, meeting them.
- A: I don't hold people responsible. Alright. I do not carry a hate towards the Germans. Neither would I carry a hate for the Jewish guy in the concentration camp who chose me to go to the gas chamber.
- Q: In terms of your son, you said you consider yourself more a citizen of the world or at least more comfortable in Europe....

A: No I didn't say that I felt more comfortable in Europe, that I don't know, but I do feel myself a member of the world so to speak. I do not feel an alliance to any particular country, I don't feel myself German. I don't think I ever felt myself German due to the fact that I never was German. I was never accepted. So I never was German. I certainly couldn't feel I was Chinese.

Q: But in terms of your children, do you feel they are American?

A: Definitely. Yes. I think at one time, I don't know when maybe many years ago I said it would be a very good idea if you would take yourself off and go to some other country and make a living there. Why should we leave?

Q: Do you think you were a different mother than anyone you knew who was an American mother?

A: Yes, I expected more from my children, I saw to it that they had more values in life, cultural wise, I saw to it that they were interested in educational things, got some educational toys only.

Q: Do you think this was different from your American counterpart?

A: Yes. The American mothers would not direct their children that much to museums, not that much to concerts or operas, not insist on their being culturally enriched. My kids went to private schools and I still remember the uproar of the mothers, why do they have to learn about music, they had a music course there. Why spend so much time for that. Why do they have to make homework for that? And that was better American people.

Q: Where did your sons go to school?

A: Barnard.

Q: In looking back, what would you think was the greatest adjustment that you had to make when you came here, or when you went to Shanghai, I should ask it both ways.

A: In Shanghai, yes, being without my mother.

Q: Was that hard for you in the beginning?

A: I would say so, yes. Yes...Here? I don't know what adjustments I had to make here. I really can't say.

Q: Did you work here at all?

A: No.

- Q: When you say the greatest adjustment in Shanghai was being without your mother, why do you think, without knowing what would eventually happen, why do you think that was a great adjustment for you? I mean...
- A: Because I was used to her taking care of all my personal needs. Here it was myself and I had to sew my button on.
- Q: You mean in Shanghai?
- A: Yes, I couldn't say here sew my button on, or shorten my dress, or make me a dress.
- Q: It was the first time you were kind of on your own.
- A: That's right.
- Q: In terms of your life now. How do you feel about Jewish successes in American politics, like Javits?
- A: I think it's disgusting that there are so many Jewish people in our New York government, in leading positions.
- A: Why?
- A: Because it only brings more anger and more hate out. (unable to translate) Koch can't do so good because the economic situation just isn't, can't be good, no matter what they will try and it goes back to us as Jews. That is my opinion.
- Q: Again, in looking back, do you think your life, this is a very hard question, do you think your life would have been very different had you, lived in Germany the entire time, had you not gone to Shanghai?
- A: Well I wouldn't be alive.
- Q: No I meant if nothing happened. If the Nazis had not come to power.
- A: It would have been a lot different, yes.
- Q: In what way do you think so?
- A: I might have succeeded in my musical career. If this would be better I don't know. Basically I think I was happier being a mother. I don't think I am what you would call a career woman. I don't think I would be 100 per cent happy and fulfilled.

- Q: But you think you might have succeeded in that, where here there was no possibility?
- A: Shanghai killed it already. Even the break into Shanghai from Germany already killed it.
- Q: In what way, I'm not so well versed what happens to a musician when...?
- A: Well when you are taking off from a certain teacher it's very hard to get used to a different teacher, number one, to find another teacher, I wasn't a beginner. I was pretty far ahead. To find somebody I would like to take guidance is already a difficult thing.
- Q: Did you find anybody in Shanghai?
- A: I didn't even look there strangely, let's put it this way.
- Q: Then the break was between '38, '39 and 1950 almost.
- Q: When you describe your being (words missing) in growing up...?
- A: It didn't hinder me at all, it didn't affect me...I think at one point I had to go to the German police department, I think it was for doing the papers for my teacher examination, I think, and I gave them proof that my father was active in the German World War 1 and that cleared the whole matter up and that was the end of that.
- Q: You mean he had been a (words missing), a soldier, whatever?
- A: He was in one way or another connected. He was listed in something, I don't know.
- Q: But you always felt you were accepted as a German?
- A: I was.